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PENCE PAYS TRIBUTE TO LATE COLUMBUS, INDIANA, BASKETBALL LEGEND

Washington, Sep 24, 2003 - Washington, D.C.— Congressman Mike Pence today paid tribute to the late Coach Bill Stearman of Columbus, Indiana. Stearman died Tuesday from complications that developed after he suffered a stroke. Below are Pence's remarks:

"Mr. Speaker, in Indiana, high school basketball is a passion. My home state has produced thousands of first-rate players and coaches since the 1940s. And one such hero passed away on Tuesday at the age of 79.

"Coach Bill Stearman's basketball acumen earned him legendary status throughout Indiana. His Columbus High and then Columbus North teams won 714 games, including two semi state titles, 12 regional championships and 27 sectional crowns. He amassed an impressive resume including two undefeated regular season teams before being inducted into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 1983.

"But, Mr. Speaker, while all of Indiana will mourn the passing of an outstanding basketball coach, Bill Stearman's hometown of Columbus, Indiana, will mourn the passing of a great man and Christian role model to generations of Columbus High School students, myself included.

"Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the City of Columbus, I extend heartfelt sympathies to Bill Stearman's family, specifically his son Bill, his grandson William and his sister Katherine. Coach Stearman embodied both the Hoosier Hysteria of Indiana high school basketball and the Hoosier Hospitality of Indiana's caring communities. He will be deeply missed."

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